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AUTHOR Ollie, Bert W., Jr.
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ABSTRACT

A survey of 35 principals was conducted to determine their perceptions about the impact environmental influences had on the desegregation planning process and its outputs in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A model based on the principle of general systems theory was designed by the investigator and used as a conceptual framework to conduct the study. The results indicate that the principals were not allocated enough staff time to be effective managers of the school district's desegregation/integration plan, and that timelines imposed upon principals by central office staff made it difficult for principals to implement and manage the plans. Apparently, a principal who is overloaded with tasks doesn't have time to play the change agent's role, which is crucial in neutralizing negative environmental influences in the desegregated school. To play the role of an effective change agent, the principal must: (1) have the appropriate perception of his or her role; (2) be willing to organize horizontally to eliminate vertical organizational constraints; and (3) formulate plans and programs to address problems created by parents' fears for students' safety, community groups that oppose desegregation, and pressures to maintain neighborhood schools. Perhaps most importantly, a principal must strive for an effective implementation of a desegregation plan. He or she must: (1) break down resistance to change; (2) design staff development programs; (3) formatively evaluate programs; (4) devise support systems to provide postiive reinforcement and alleviate stress; (5) break down internal communication barriers; (6) organize and carry out a systematic planning process to select desegregation programs; and (7) conduct the planning process in conjunction with the school district's budget cycle. (KH)

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SOME OF THE ROLES PRINCIPALS SHOULD PLAY AS CHANGE-AGENTS IN NEUTRALIZING NEGATIVE INFLUENCES IN THE DESEGREGATION/INTEGRATION SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

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by

Bert W. Ollie, Jr.

Assistant Professor and Program Specialist, Midwest
Race Desegregation Assistance Center
College of Education
Kansas State University

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THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

When school desegregation has not been a success one of the major reasons is the absence of a principal's strong and astute leadership. Researchers have repeatedly noted that a strong principal with particular leadership characteristics is the key to a successful desegregated school—or any good school. The principal sets the tone for a school and makes it clear to students and staff what is expected of them (Edgerton, 1977; NIE, 1977).

The process of school desegregation is one of social change--social change of such magnitude that it must be institutionalized by administrative measures to be truly operational. In studying the process of school desegregation it becomes necessary to pinpoint the administrative role most centrally involved (NIE 1974).

Theoretically the principal should play a critical role as change agent because of his or her exposure to the daily operational consequences of desegregation and his or her middle position in the administrative structure between the school site and larger community forces. The principal's position affords a broader perspective than that of teachers and better focus than the superintendent and school board. The principal is removed from the day to day classroom experience, but nevertheless, the principal is in a position to witness the impact upon the children of any particular policies, practices, or procedures (NIE 1974).

According to classic administrative theory one would characterize the principal as the implementor of school board and superintendent developed policy.

The Principals Perceptions of the Impact Environmental Influences have on a Desegregation Planning Process

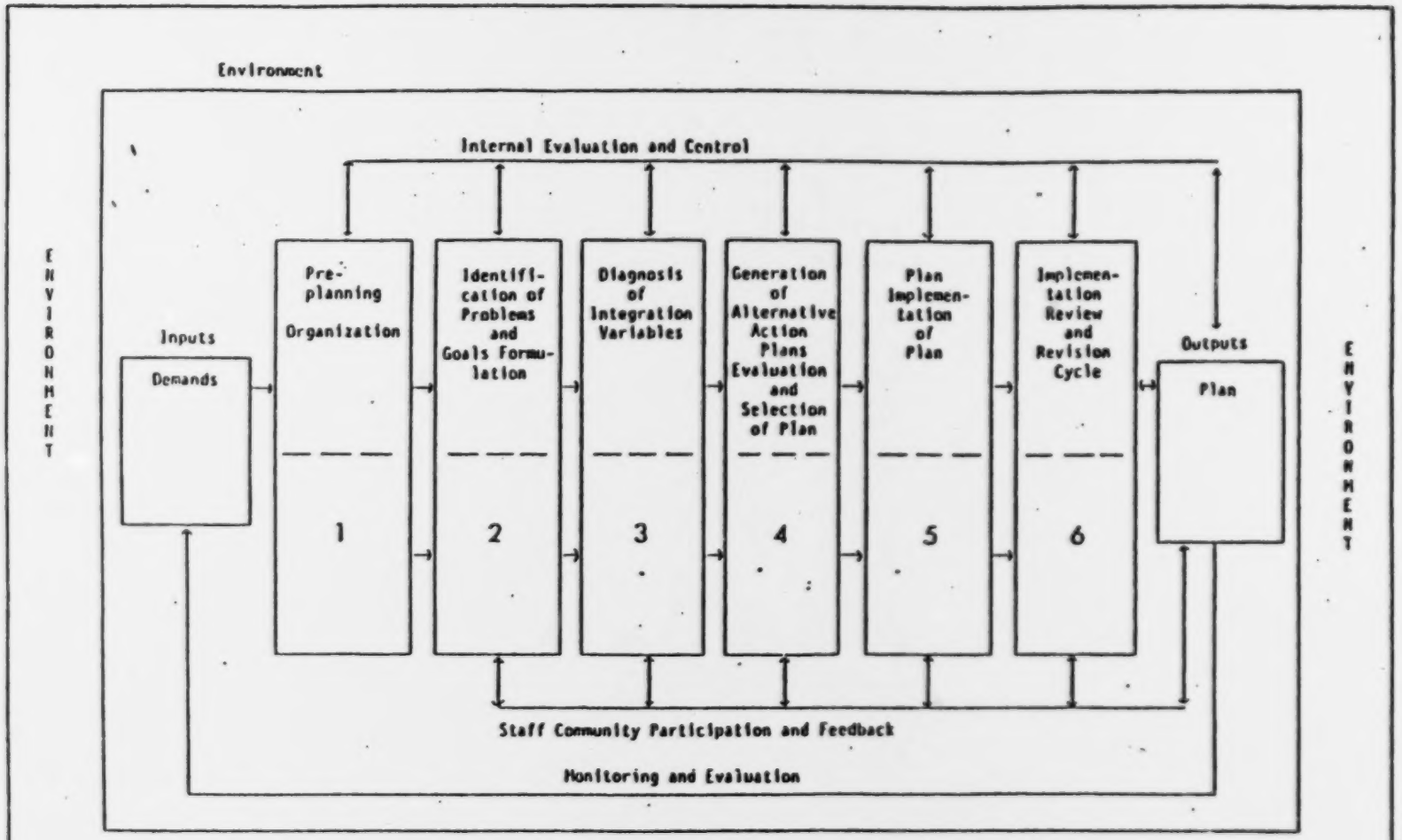
Because the management role of principals is so crucial in the success of school desegregation/integration plans this investigator randomly selected 35 principals involved in school desegregation planning. The purpose of randomly selecting 35 principals was to determine their perceptions about the impact environmental influences had on the desegregation planning process and its outputs in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the access universe for the study. The Milwaukee Public schools had 162 principals and 101,926 students when this study was conducted in 1972.

A model based on the principals of general systems theory was designed by this investigator and used as a conceptual framework to conduct this study. This conceptual model, which depicts a desegregation planning conversion process which produces a desegregation/integration plan, is in an environment where some environmental influences have an effect on the desegregation/integration plan produced by the planning cycle (Ollie, 1978). This model is illustrated on the following page as Figure 1.

Utilizing this model as the conceptual framework this study generated data which reflects principals perceptions about the impact certain environmental influences had on the desegregation planning process and the desegregation/integration plan produced by this process. The data generated by this study is presented in Tables I and II on pages 5, 6, and 7.

Figure I

DESEGREGATE IMPACT PLANNING MODEL



Characteristics

Limited Resources
Fear of White Flight
Court Guidelines
Concerns about Quality Education
Internal Organizational Communication Barriers
Black Nationalism

White Supremist Organizations
Unionization of Teachers
School Board Opposition
Overloaded School Personnel
School Districts Socioeconomic Mix

Integrate Neighborhoods
Community Stability
State and Federal Grants for Desegregation
Good Communication Networks
Civil Right Groups

In the desegregation planning environment, influence characteristics may be positive, negative, or neutral.

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SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR MILWAUKEE PRINCIPALS

Table I. Negative grand means for principals across planning stages by influence items. (Scale -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3)

Negative Items	Negative Grand Means
1. Fear of white flight	-0.241305
2. Cooperation from school board members	-0.71552
3. Cooperation from teachers union	-0.396543
4. Middle class residents voicing fears about sending children to school with lower class minority students or other disadvantaged youth	-0.62929
5. Desire to maintain neighborhood schools	-1.13768
6. Fears for students' safety due to possible racial conflicts in the schools	-0.63362
7. Allocation of enough staff time to allow school systems personnel sufficient time to engage in desegregation planning	- .422799
8. Opposition to bussing due to fears for students safety	-0.75353
9. Community groups that oppose desegregation e.g., Black Panthers, American Nazi Party etc. groups	-0.50431
10. Specific time lines to complete and implement the desegregation plan	-0.16342

Negative Grand Means Continued

Negative Items	Negative Grand Means
11. The possibility of maintaining a stable white school age population because of birth rates and other factors.	-0.25020
12. Enough accurate information and other details needed to make school desegregation planning a success, e.g., drawing up bus routes, curriculum planning etc.	-0.543103

SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR MILWAUKEE PRINCIPALS

Table II. Positive grand means for principals across planning stages by influence items (Scale -3 -2 -1 0 +1 +2 +3)

Positive Items	Positive Grand Means
1. Cooperation from teachers	.725815
2. Cooperation from administrative staff	1.44447
3. Concerns about maintaining quality education	1.40755
4. Community groups that favor desegregation e.g., civil rights groups, churches, unions, etc.	1.46787
5. Available school district resources e.g., money, facilities, personnel, etc.	.47844
6. State and Federal money for school desegregation	.88361
7. Communication among those involved in the planning process	0.73707
8. Effect of court guidelines on desegregation planning	.81271
9. The effect of parents and other non-school personnel devoting enough time to desegregation planning	1.07757

According to the perceptions of those principals responding in Milwaukee, nine of the influences included in this study had a positive impact on the desegregation planning cycle and eleven had a negative impact (Ollie 1978).

An Optimal Location to Manipulate Environmental Influences

The extent to which administrators in desegregated/integrated school districts neutralize negative environmental influences is a major factor in the stability of a school desegregation plan. (e.g., If parents have fear about their children's safety, those that can afford to (black and white) will send their sons and daughters to school elsewhere, thus eroding the school districts desegregation efforts (Wegmann 1976). The principal as the implementor of school desegregation plans and the manager of its mechanics from day to day has an optimal vantage point to monitor the impact of influences in the school districts environment and manipulate them to (1) maintain the stability of the desegregation/integration plan and (2) enhance the probability that school desegregation in the building he/she is managing will have positive outcomes for those students in attendance.

The Role of the Principals Superordinates in Facilitating the Neutralization of Negative Environmental Influences

If the principals are to be effective in the neutralization of negative environmental influences, his or her superordinates must facilitate the effort.

According to the perceptions of those principals involved in this investigators study in Milwaukee (1) principals were not allocated enough staff time to be effective managers of the school districts desegregation/integration plan and (2) timelines imposed upon principals by central office staff made it difficult for principals to implement and manage the school districts desegregation/integration plans. If Murphy's law (anything than can go wrong will) is not built into timelines for desegregated school districts by central office staff and principals don't have adequate staff to complete assigned tasks, this leads to principals in desegregated districts being overloaded. A principal who is overloaded doesn't have time to play the change agent's role, which is crucial in neutralizing negative environmental influences in the desegregated school environment.

To facilitate the principal's ability to neutralize negative environmental influences in the desegregated school environment central office staff should also (1) decentralize decision making; (2) incumber funds to be used at the principals discretion in his or her day to day management of the school districts desegregation/integration efforts. This will make it possible for principals to make the necessary day to day revisions in the school districts desegregation plans.

Some of the Roles of the Principal as Change Agents in Neutralizing Negative Environmental Influences in His or Her School

The remainder of this paper will be confined to delineating some of the roles of the principal as change agent in neutralizing negative environmental influences in his or her school.

The Preception of the Principal of His or Her Role

The principal's perceptions of their roles within the confines of a school system may serve as a basis for inaction or limit the range of possibilities for action thought available (Sarason 1972). The effects of perceptions of self and the tendency of principals to view the system as a primary determinate are forces to be reckoned with as expectations and perceptions can and do produce self-fulfilling prophecies (NIE 1974). For example, in Foskett's study reviewing group attitudes toward principal's roles, the findings indicated that principals were least accurate in their assesment of the perceptions and expectations school board members and superintendents had of their roles (Foskett 1967).

The way a principal plays his or her role is to some extent is idiosyncratic behavior despite organizational role expectations (Getzels et al. 1968). The role of a principal in a desegregated/ integrated school setting is contingent, in part, on the perceptions that he or she has of their role. In many instances it is possible for a principal to play a change agents role and neutralize negative environmental influences e.g. desire to maintain neighborhood schools, fears for students safety due to possible racial conflicts in the school if they preceive this as their role.

The Utilization of Horizontal Power

If a principal in a desegregated school setting attempts to play a change agents role and is constrainted by vertical power perhaps horizontal power may be utilized as a countervailing institutional force

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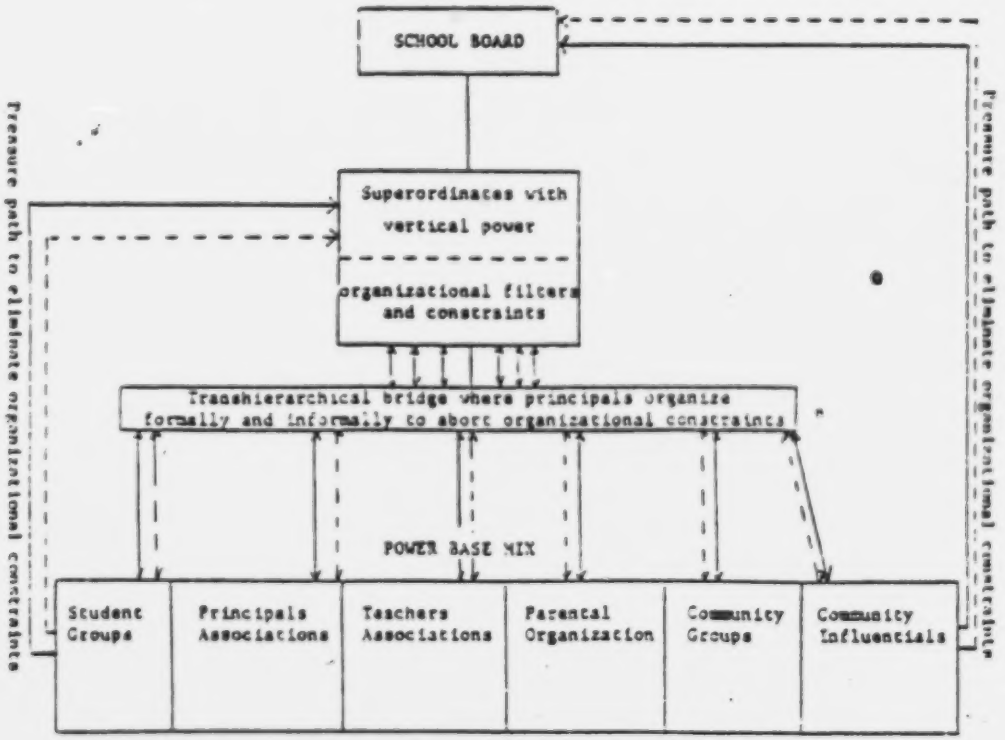
that would permit the principal to assume a change agents role and neutralize negative environmental influences.

According to Chester Bernard power comes from the bottom of the organization since superordinates cannot exercise power unless it is granted to them by their subordinates (Bernard 1938). According to Bernard, caveat principals in large and medium school districts may be able to abort the efforts of role incumbents in the vertical power structure if they make efforts to prevent principals in a desegregated school district from playing the role of a change agent to neutralize negative environmental influences.

The means principals in desegregated/integrated school districts may use to exercise their horizontal power would be alonge the transhieracial bridge, which is illustrated below as Figure II.

Figure II



MODEL FOR PRINCIPALS USE
OF HORIZONTAL POWER

By organizing horizontally it is possible for principals to eliminate many of the organizational constraints which prevent them from being change agents that neutralize negative environmental influences.

The Importance of Principals Assuming a Proactive Posture in Neutralizing Negative School Desegregation Environmental Influences

Principals involved in the Milwaukee study indicated that (1) fears for students safety due to possible racial conflicts in the schools; (2) community groups that oppose desegregation (i.e., Black Panther, American Nazi party etc.) had an adverse effect on desegregation planning in Milwaukee and the school districts desegregation plan.

If principals in desegregated schools don't formulate (1) human relations plans; (2) crisis prevention plans, (3) crisis reaction plans; and (4) community relations programs to neutralize these negative influences this may cause the desegregation plan to erode. For example, if a principal in a desegregated school lulls him or herself into a state of false security because the school situation appears calm, the situation may erupt, racial violence may suddenly occur and the desegregated school may be in a state of social disorganization until the racial violence subsides. In the interim black and white parents have started to remove their sons' and daughters' from school due to fear for their safety. Once this occurs it will be difficult to abate the fears of parents for their sons and daughters safety. The results will probably be more and more middle class flight from this desegregated school (Wegmann 1976).

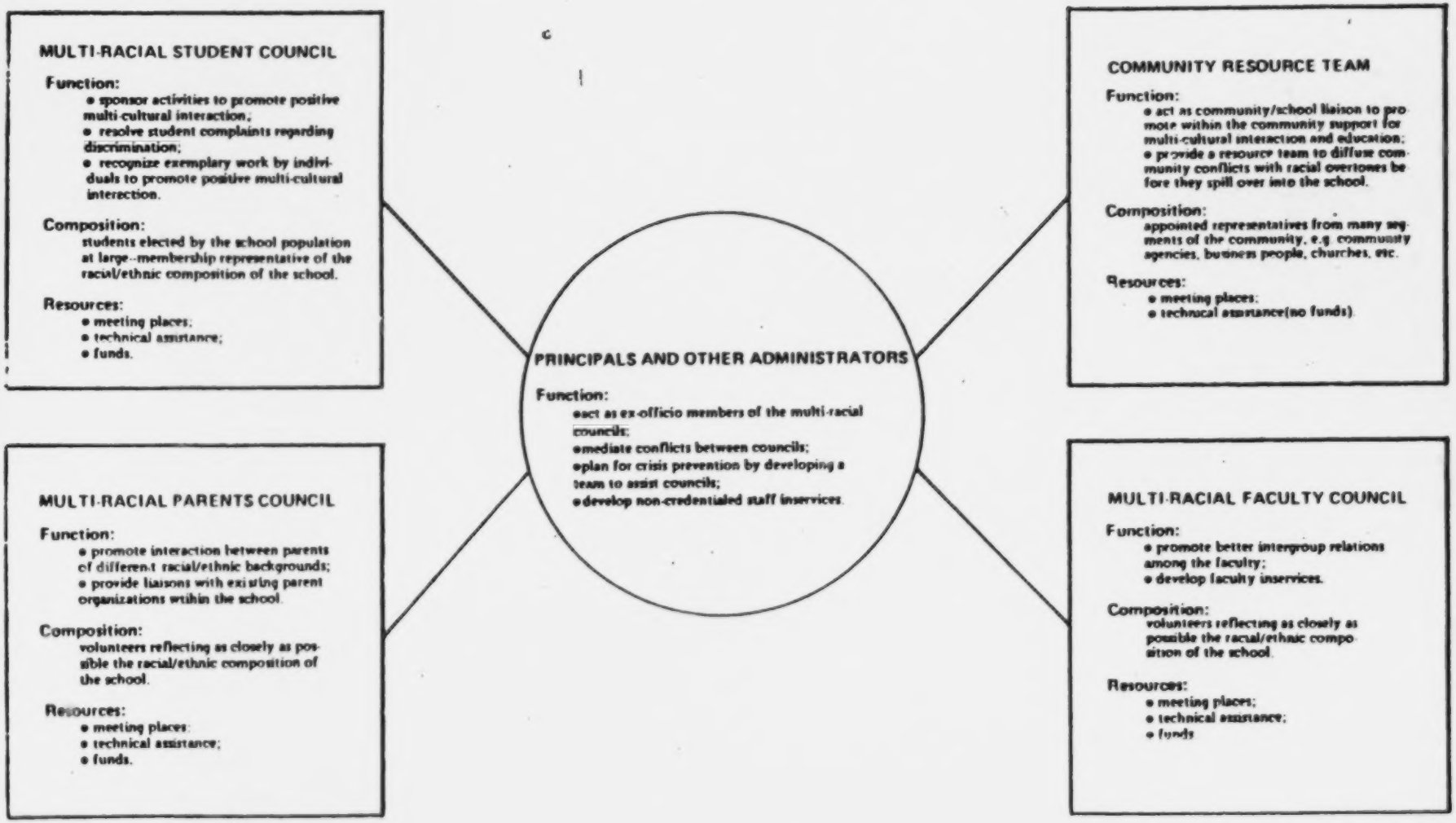
A very important planning axiom for principals to remember in attempting to neutralize negative environmental influences in a desegregated/integrated school setting is that it is much easier to prevent a negative event from gaining lots of momentum, than to try to stop it once it occurs. Events that go into motion and gain momentum tend to stay in motion (Wakefield 1977). It is therefore imperative for managers of desegrated schools to assume a proactive posture when making an effort to neutralize negative influences in the desegrated/integrated school environment.

Planning for the Adoption of Programs to Neutralize Negative Environmental Influences in the Desegregated School Environment

Another negative influence perceived by principals involved in the Milwaukee study on desegregation planning and the school districts desegregation plan was desire to maintain neighborhood schools. One approach that may be utilized to neutralize this negative influence may be to develop speciality programs that would make the school attractive to students from throughout the school district (i.e., computer science, radio and television).

In the process of determining which programs to adopt to neutralize the negative influence desire to maintain neighborhood schools the principal should get input from all segments of the school cummunity. A model to assist the principal in getting input from the school community in the adoption of desegregation programs is presented on the following page as Figure III. This model is also designed to promote positive multi-racial interaction within the school community.(Ollie 1978).

Figure III


MULTI-RACIAL STUDENT COUNCIL
Function:
• sponsor activities to promote positive multi-cultural interaction;
• resolve student complaints regarding discrimination;
• recognize exemplary work by individuals to promote positive multi-cultural interaction.
Composition:
students elected by the school population at large--membership representative of the racial/ethnic composition of the school.
Resources:
• meeting places;
• technical assistance;
• funds.
COMMUNITY RESOURCE TEAM
Function:
• act as community/school liaison to promote within the community support for multi-cultural interaction and education;
• provide a resource team to diffuse community conflicts with racial overtones before they spill over into the school.
Composition:
appointed representatives from many segments of the community, e.g. community agencies, business people, churches, etc.
Resources:
• meeting places;
• technical assistance(no funds)
PRINCIPALS AND OTHER ADMINISTRATORS
Function:
•act as ex-officio members of the multi-racial councils;
•mediate conflicts between councils;
•plan for crisis prevention by developing a team to assist councils;
•develop non-credentialed staff inservices.
MULTI-RACIAL PARENTS COUNCIL
Function:
• promote interaction between parents of different racial/ethnic backgrounds;
• provide liaisons with existing parent organizations wtihin the school.
Composition:
volunteers reflecting as closely as possible the racial/ethnic composition of the school.
Resources:
• meeting places;
• technical assistance;
• funds.
MULTI-RACIAL FACULTY COUNCIL
Function:
• promote better intergroup relations among the faculty;
• develop faculty inservices.
Composition:
volunteers reflecting as closely as possible the racial/ethnic composition of the school.
Resources:
• meeting places;
• technical assistance;
• funds

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The Successful Implementation of School Desegregation Program

The principal has the major role to play in the successful implementation of all school desegregation programs. Just because a program is adopted doesn't mean it will be successfully implemented. In many instances programs that are reported to be implemented are only a concept since the program is not in operation in a school building. The program therefore cannot be stabilized so that it may reach the stage of maximum returns (Loucks 1979). If desegregation programs are not properly implemented they can't neutralize negative influences in the desegregation school environment.

Some Major Factors in Principals Implementing School Desegregation Programs Designed to Neutralize Negative Influences in the Desegregation Planning Environment

1. Breaking down resistance to change

The successful implementation of desegregation programs (i.e., cooperative learning, human relations programs, etc) requires change and some staff person in desegregated school resist change. The principal must find ways of breaking down resistance to change if school desegregation/ integration programs are to be successfully implemented. One method of breaking down staff resistance to desegregation programs was mentioned earlier involving staff members in program planning. Three other management strategies that may be utilized in breaking down the resistance to the implementation of school desegregation programs are (1) providing incentive, (2) manipulation and co-optation, and (3) explicit and implicit

coercion (Kotter and Schlesinger 1979).

2. Designing staff development programs.

One of the major reasons desegregation programs are not successfully implemented is because of the absence of staff training to prepare staff persons to manage the new program. The principal must make an assesment of the training needed, design an inservice program and make sure the inservice training is provided.

3. Formatively evaluating school desegregation programs

Any program thats being implemented must have the bugs ironed out. A program in its initial phases of implementation needs more revisions because new programs have more problems. Over a period of time fewer problems occur and the program needs fewer revisions (Wakefield 1977). Principals in a desegregation/integrated school building are in the best position to formatively evaluate new school desegregation programs being implemented in his or her building and make the necessary revision based on daily feedback.

4. Devising support systems to provide positive reinforcement and alleviate stress.

When staff persons work with a program for the first time they are likely to have many problems. These problems lead to frustrations which put staff persons under stress. It is possible for the principal to provide a lot of positive reinforcement to staff persons, him or herself, peer counseling may be used additionally as a means of providing positive reinforcement to staff persons. In addition to providing

positive reinforcement, the principals should also provide technical assistance for staff persons who need it. He or she may provide some of the technical assistance, in conjunction with cadre teachers and consultants. Positive reinforcement alone cannot be relied on entirely to relieve high levels of frustration that occur during the early adoption of school desegregation programs.

5. Breaking down internal communication barriers

If principals are to formatively evaluate and revise school desegregation programs it is imperative that they receive feedback from staff persons about the problems they encounter daily. This cannot occur unless the desegregated/integrated school has two-way communication flow. Internally communication barriers (i.e., the status barrier) often impede two-way communication flow.

It is incumbent upon principals to devise a communication system to overcome internal organization communication barriers and facilitate two way communication flow. Some approaches a principal may use to accomplish this include (1) suggestion boxes in convenient locations throughout the schools; (2) an open door policy for staff person to confer with the principal; (3) going to the teachers lounge to communicate with teachers; (4) going to department meetings and asking for feedback from teachers; and (5) develop group processes designed to gather staff feedback.

6. Organizing and going through a systematic planning process to select school desegregation programs

When principals are considering programs to neutralize negative school desegregation influences they should go through a systematic planning

process before making program selections. A planning model that may be useful to principals in selecting desegregation/integration programs is illustrated below as Figure IV.

Figure IV

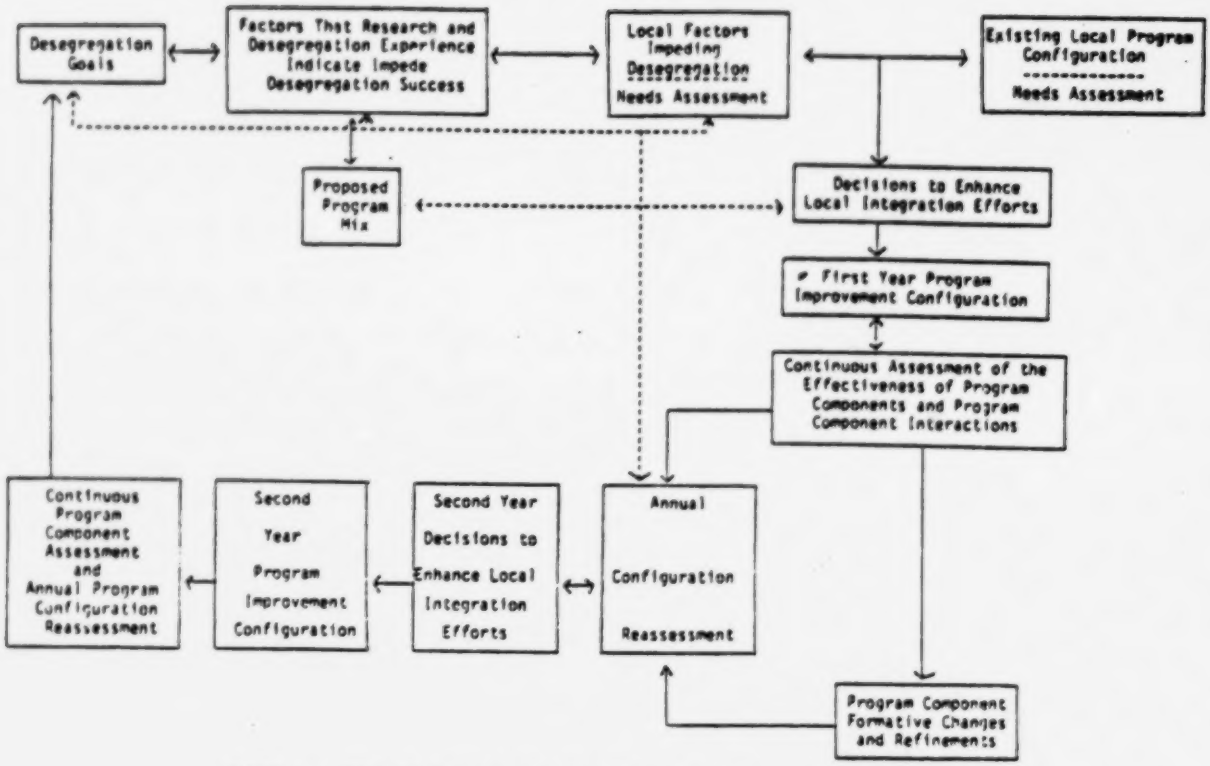
Desegregation Goals
Factors That Research and Desegregation Experience Indicate Impede Desegregation Success
Local Factors Impeding Desegregation
Needs Assessment
Existing Local Program Configuration
Needs Assessment
Proposed Program Mix
Decisions to Enhance Local Integration Efforts
First Year Program Improvement Configuration
Continuous Assessment of the Effectiveness of Program Components and Program Component Interactions
Continuous Program Component Assessment and Annual Program Configuration Reassessment
Second Year Program Improvement Configuration
Second Year Decisions to Enhance Local Integration Efforts
Annual Configuration Reassessment
Program Component Formative Changes and Refinements

FIGURE 4: A MODEL FOR PLANNING AND IMPROVING THE DELIVERY OF COMPREHENSIVE SERVICES IN URBAN DESEGREGATED SCHOOLS

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This planning paradigm features an annual needs assesment principals should conduct to determine if the desegregation/integration program configuration they have selected is interacting effectively to neutralize negative school desegregation environmental influences. After giving the desegregation/integration program configuration a reasonable trial period the present program mix should be altered if it is determined to be ineffective in dilluting the strength of negative school desegregation/ integrated influences (Ollie and Leonard 1980).

7. Go through the systematic planning process in conjunction with the desegregated/integrated school districts budget cycle. —

Planning for the adoption of desegregated/integrated programs should be done in conjunction with the school districts budget cycle. This will make it possible for the school boards to encumber the necessary funds to adequately finance the desegregation/integration program configuration. Selecting desegregation/integration programs after the budget cycle has been completed will probably result in the desegregation/integration programs being inadequately funded since school boards will not know how much money should be encumbered to finance the selected programs.

The budget for desegregation/integration programs should be elastic enough to (1) compensate for inflation and (2) provide discretionary funds for principals to make necessary program revisions (e.g.) consultants may have to be hired to give a principal advice on programatic alterations.

It is the hope of this author that the suggestions delineated in this paper will be of major assistance to principals in neutralizing negative influences in the desegregated/integrated school environments they are managing.

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